

NANAIMO PADDLERS

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS IN CLUB PADDLES

The key to safe paddling is to know your abilities and develop the 'soft' skills to ensure that you remain within your comfort and safety zone. The key to safe and enjoyable paddling within a group is to communicate your needs for safety and enjoyment and accommodate the needs of the others you are paddling with.

Participants in Nanaimo Paddler's functions should consider the following:

Coordinators: People who agree to coordinate a paddling trip for the Nanaimo Paddlers are simply agreeing to arrange and organize a paddling event. They are not expected to be expert paddlers. The Nanaimo Paddlers is a club of peers, all with varying paddling abilities. On all club paddles, each participant is expected to be aware of their own abilities and limitations and be responsible for their own safety.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS PRIOR TO MEETING FOR THE OUTING

- If you wish to join a paddle, contact the coordinator, preferably 24 hours before the scheduled start time
- Make yourself aware of the tides and currents in area of the proposed paddle
- Check the weather forecast
- Determine the meeting place from the co-coordinator
- Inquire of the co-coordinator what the plans are for the trip – what distance will be covered and how long should it take
- If you have not done so before, confirm to the co-coordinator that you have signed a club waiver and it has been delivered to the club membership officer three days before the event
- Be prepared to advise the co-coordinator that you have the necessary skills to handle your boat in the expected conditions and execute a re-entry should you need to do that manoeuvre
- Be prepared to confirm to the co-coordinator that you will have with you the safety gear required for paddling by regulation and also what additional gear you might have including spare clothes, a VHF radio, a first aid kit and the like
- You may want to inquire whether the co-coordinator will be bringing the club first aid kit
- On longer trips you may want to inquire whether a float plan is being filed and the details of any float plan

ON THE BEACH PRIOR TO LAUNCH PARTICIPANTS WILL WANT TO:

- Discuss relevant tides and currents, the weather forecast, and hours of daylight
- Confirm to the other members of the group that you have the required safety gear and be prepared to advise others of any additional safety gear you have with you beyond what is required by regulation
- Discuss the plan for the outing, the estimated distance and estimated time of return
- Inquire of other members of group as to their experience and rescue abilities
- Inquire as to who will be acting as the group lead(s) and who will be acting as sweep(s)

Groups paddling together should be aware that there are a number of common practices that result in group outing being more enjoyable and safer. They include:

- Be aware that in a group it will be the slowest paddlers, often the ones in the rear who will necessarily set the pace. Other paddlers should try to remain within calling distance of the other members of the group.

- If the group does become spread out so that oral communication is not practical, the following signals are commonly used:
 - Vertical paddle (held straight up): Come together
 - Horizontal paddle: STOP
 - Whistle, one loud blast: STOP and look
 - Whistle, series of loud toots: Come to me, or come together

- If an assisted rescue becomes necessary, paddlers should remember that:
 - The person being rescued should try to follow the directions of the person(s) assisting in the rescue
 - Those not actively involved in the rescue should stay close together as a group and if necessary try to find a sheltered area and await the completion of the rescue

- In larger groups it can be useful for smaller groups of 2 or 3 persons to agree to keep an eye on each other (the buddy system)

- If you want to leave the group courtesy requires that you inform the others of your plans

- In larger groups which include people of different skill levels it can often be useful to break the group in smaller groups and set appropriate plans for each

THOSE WHO WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN NIGHT PADDLES

- Should remember to bring adequate lights so that they can see and be seen
- Some groups might adopt a system of identification by numbers which can compensate for the difficulty of counting the group in the dark.

THEN, GO OUT AND HAVE FUN....AND A GOOD, AND SAFE, TRIP!